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## **NEWS**

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**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE**  
**HERBERT H. BATEMAN**  
**CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY READINESS**  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY**

*March 18, 1998*

I would like to welcome everyone here today to this Readiness Subcommittee hearing. The subject of today's hearing is the adequacy of the Quarterly Readiness Reports that are provided to Congress by the Department of Defense. These reports, mandated by Congress, are designed to give us an ongoing picture of the day-to-day readiness of our military forces. We are concerned with these reports because the Subcommittee continues to be mystified by the disparity between the reports we receive from the Pentagon, and the reports we receive from personnel when we visit units in the field.

Committee members have become increasingly aware of these apparent disconnects between the readiness picture presented by formal readiness reports and from the testaments of the administration and the leadership of the Pentagon, and the reality that seems to exist in the military as determined by the many commentaries on readiness made to members and staff of this committee. Yet, we continue to hear of a growing concern over many of the issues affecting readiness, including operating tempo, increased deployments, morale, the impact of peacekeeping operations, and the increasing use of training funds for other purposes. Ironically none of these types of issues are measured in the services readiness reporting system, nor do they get addressed in the formal quarterly readiness report provided to Congress.

Nearly four years ago, GAO cited the need to develop a more comprehensive readiness measurement system and provided the Department of Defense with specific indicators, cited by military commanders, as being critical to readiness assessments but not included in their readiness reports. The Department agreed that it needed a more comprehensive readiness measurement system and contracted with the Logistics Management Institute (LMI) to assess GAO's recommended indicators to determine which of the 29 recommendations may have the greatest potential value for DOD decision makers charged with maintaining high readiness. The LMI assessment, completed in October 1994, concluded that 19 of the 29 indicators recommended by GAO offered a high or medium value for readiness assessments. That is, those 19 indicators could allow DOD to measure additional factors that cause changes in readiness, provide early notice of any adverse changes, provide the opportunity to improve readiness, and detect trends that may affect future readiness. LMI concluded that "the GAO study and our analysis provide a starting point for identifying a more complete and useful set of readiness indicators."

Since the GAO recommendations and the assessment by LMI, the committee became increasingly concerned that DOD would not take steps to include any of the identified and validated indicators in their readiness measuring system. Due to the continued lack of progress on the part of DOD, or the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to initiate actions to improve the completeness and accuracy of readiness information provided by military units through the Status of Resources and Training System (SORTS), the committee took action. Last year, as part of the FY98 National Defense Authorization bill, this committee included a provision that would expand the quarterly readiness reports provided to Congress.

This provision required the Department of Defense to develop a plan, using the indicators identified by the GAO and validated by the LMI, as having a high or medium value for readiness assessment, that would expand the scope of the quarterly readiness reports. Specifically, the provision stipulates that "each report shall also include information regarding each of the active components of the armed forces (and an evaluation of such information) with respect to each of the (19) readiness indicators." The provision in law was necessary because Congress saw little effort by DOD to upgrade readiness assessment at the unit level.

Although DOD has developed and submitted a plan of how they plan to enhance the quarterly readiness reports to be submitted to Congress effective in October 1998, I am greatly concerned that the plan does not make more of an effort to effectively enhance congressional oversight of military readiness. SORTS data, which has long been recognized as having significant limitations when evaluating the true readiness of a unit, continues to be the principal source of readiness reports information. The proposed plan states that DOD will not provide data for six of the 19 indicators because either the data is already provided to Congress through other documents or there is no reasonable or accepted measurement for these indicators. The plan seems to take the stand that no new readiness reporting requirements are necessary to enhance the quarterly readiness reports.

I am anxious to hear about the ongoing efforts in the Pentagon to do a better job in assessing readiness. Given that the readiness indicators to be included in the quarterly readiness reports were identified, validated by reputable sources, and mandated by Congress, I am particularly interested in hearing from our panels some explanations about why the plan to expand the quarterly readiness reports seems to limit the use of the indicators in developing readiness data.

We are very fortunate to have two panels of individuals who can speak to the Pentagon's efforts to improve readiness assessment and reporting. The first panel is made up of GAO representatives who will provide some background on the overall readiness reporting system and then give an assessment of the Pentagon's plan to enhance future quarterly readiness reports. The second panel is made up of individuals who are responsible for the readiness report system and include a representative from DOD, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and from each of the military services.